لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

March 1965

ROR

EDITORS

S. D. AHMAD M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India. He declared that God had conferred upon him the dignity of Prophethood. He claimed that he had received this blessing through being a perfect follower of the Holy Prophet. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the Expected Messenger of all the religions of the world. He explained that God had raised him for the purpose of re-establishing the dominion of Islam and to shed light upon the true teachings of the Holy Quran. With him, in fact, had started a new era, the Renaissance of Islam.

One startling historical disclosure he made, was that Jesus Christ had escaped death at the crucifixion and had subsequently travelled to Kashmir, where his tomb still exists at Srinagar.

When Hazrat Ahmad published his claims and the revelations received by him, he encountered a severe storm of opposition from all quarters and all communities. In spite of this opposition God began to strengthen his voice and people began to follow him. At the time of his death in 1908, he had gathered around him a group of faithful and staunch followers, not only in India but also in other countries, numbering hundreds of thousands.

After his death in 1908, he was succeeded by the Late Hazrat Maulvi Nuruddin Sahib as his First Khalifa. At his death in 1914, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, was elected as his Second Khalifa.

The new Caliph undertook a vast programme particularly of the propagation of Islam, and under his guidance, the Movement is carrying on vigorous missionary activities throughout the world. There is now a network of Ahmadiyya missions in almost every free country.

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The Secretary,
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Rabwah, West Pakistan.

Printed at the Nusrat Art Press, Rabwah, and Published by M. Masud Ahmad B.A.,
for the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Rabwah, West Pakistan.

The Review of Religions

A Monthly Magazine Devoted to the Cause of Islam

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles, nor does it accept any responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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Annual subscriptions including Packing and Postage :

1.	Pakistan, India and Ceylon :	... Rs. 10
2.	England and other Sterling Areas	... £1.
3.	U.S.A. and other Dollar Areas :	... $3.00

Notes :— All Cheques and Drafts should be on any bank in Pakistan. But if these are on any foreign bank, a collection charge of 50 cents for U.S.A. and 4 sh. for U.K. should be sent in addition to the subscription as above.

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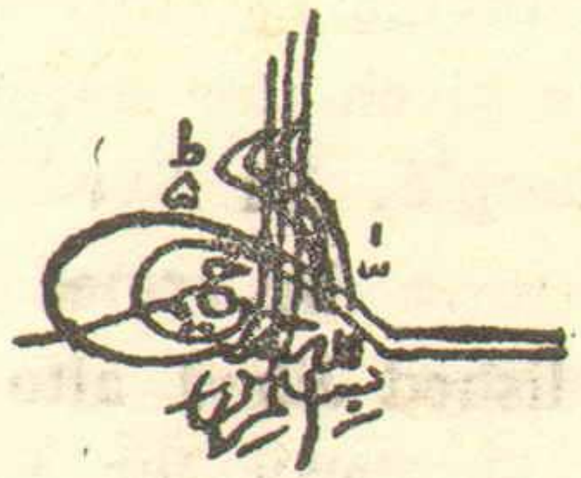

نحمدہ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

The Review of Religions

RABWAH, WEST PAKISTAN.

Vol. LIX **MARCH 1965** **No. III**

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An Objection Refuted

Mr. Nasim Saifi

Recenly an article entitled, "Reconstruction of Islamic thought" appeared in the Daily Pakistan Times. I have read the article with great interest. I have no reason to doubt the good intentions of the writer—Mian Abdur Rashid—in making references to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. But I feel constrained to say that he has neither grasped the Ahmadiyya Doctrine of Jihad nor has he understood the import of it.

I should like to make the following few observations, which I feel will be of interest to the readers of the Review of Religions and which will also put things right in this respect.

Mian Abdur Rashid has opined that "Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, who had started work on the lines of Sir Syed and had won the admiration of the Muslim public for a short while, on account of his extraodinary skill in polemics, successfully

rebutted the Christian and Arya Samajist attacks on Islam n the initial stages. But he got ultimately entangled in an intricate maze of vague words and terminology and declared himself a prophet. His movement thereafter lost all appeal. Some of the policies of Sir Syed were given the status of articles of faith by the Mirza Sahib. For example, Sir Syed was of the opinion that time was no more opportune for armed Jihad against the British, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad abolished Jihad altogether and substituted it by a Jihad of the pen. Similarly, Sir Syed's policies of co-operation with the British were given the status of almost a religious duty."

It is absolutely untrue to say that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad started work on the lines of Sir Syed who, in the very words of Mian Abdur Rashid "denied some of the things of the unseen world like angels, jinn, miracles etc." And the very first publication of Hazrat Ahmad—the *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya*—was based on the solid proofs of the unseen things. It is quite obvious that he who denies the existence of angels, can have no faith in the revelation of the Holy Quran. Thus it can be safely said—and in fact Sir Syed said it himself—that he did not believe that the Holy Quran is a revealed book. On the other hand, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, offered huge amounts in prizes to the followers of other faiths to disprove that the Holy Quran is a revelation from God. He called upon the sages and divines of other faiths to compare their religious scriptures with the Holy Quran and to present even a fraction of the beautiful excellence with which the Holy Quran is replete.

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Could the two things be said to be at par ? Could anyone suggest—even with the wildest imagination—that the man who started his work with the presentation of the revealed Word of God was working on the lines of the one who did not even believe in revelation for, the very medium of revelation—angels—had been denied by him.

I ask Main Abdur Rashid to revise his remarks in the light of my observation which I have made in the above lines.

As for Jihad, there is nothing farther from the truth than to say that "Mirza Ghulam Ahmad abolished Jihad altogether

and substituted it by a Jihad of the pen."

In one of his poems, Hazrat Ahmad says:

کیوں بھولتے ہو تم یضع الحرب کی خبر
کیا یہ نہیں بخاری میں دیکھو تو کھول کر

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فرما چکا ہے سید کونین مصطفی
عیسی مسیح جنگوں کا کر دے گا التوا

تم میں سے جس کو دین و دیانت سے ہے پیار
اب اس کا فرض ہے کہ وہ دل کر کے استوار

لوگوں کو یہ بتائے کہ وقت مسیح ہے
اب جنگ اور جہاد حرام و قبیح ہے

Translation: Why have you forgotten the news contained in the words 'Yaza-ul-Harb' i.e., he will do away with the wars. Don't you find it in the Bukhari; look it up there.

The Chief of the Universe, Mustafa, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, has foretold that Jesus, the Messiah will *put off* the wars.

Everyone of you who loves religion and honesty should now gird up his loin and take it upon himself as a duty to tell the people that this is the time of the Messiah and, therefore, the war and the Jihad is now forbidden and it is an undesirable act.

The word "*iltiwa*" can never mean cancellation. It only indicates postponement, or putting off a thing till another time. And that is what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, as the Promised Messiah, had to do. He was to put off the Jihad with the sword, till another time. And in fact, what it really meant was that in the time of the Promised Messiah, no followers of other faiths would attack the Muslims with sword and that being the case, the Muslims would also have no cause to take up the sword. Hazrat Mirza Sahib also says:

یعنی وہ وقت امن کا ہوگا نہ جنگ کا
بھولیں گے لوگ مشغلہ تیر و تفنگ کا

i.e. That will be the time of peace and not of war. The people will forget everything about the weapons of war for religion.

I hope Mian Abdur Rashid will agree with me that Islam does not ask its followers to take up the sword and go about killing the non-Muslims. That certainly is not Jihad.

I do not think it is necessary to go into details of what really Jihad is and in what circumstances the Muslims are permitted to take up the sword. The Holy Quran quite clearly states the fact that the Muslims can only fight a defensive war and the books of Hadith, perhaps, contain scores of Sayings of the Holy Prophet wherein he is reported to have said that Jihad can take various forms, like preaching and reforming oneself.

In short, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib did not in any way toe the line of Sir Syed, nor did he cancel the Jihad with the sword for all times to come.

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Eid-ul-Azha Sacrifices

Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad

Translated by Ch. Ali Muhammad B.A.,B.T.

1. An honourable friend who is still outside the pale of Ahmadiyyat writes to point out that the subject of animal sacrifices on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha is the burning topic of the day. What is the right Islamic teaching on the subject with particular reference to the Holy Quran, the Hadith and the Sunnah. He has asked me to elucidate whether animal sacrifices are obligatory only on Hajis (Pilgrims) or on non-Hajis as well.

2. Will it not be advisible under the present circumstances to distribute cash money among the poor and the needy or spend it on some charitable institutions instead of slaughtering numberless animals on this occasion and thus waste the animal wealth of the country?

3. Do not these animal sacrifices adversely affect the national wealth of the country and particularly the supply of milk and butter as the staple food of the people?

These are the three questions to which my attention has been drawn and which loom large in the pages of the leading news-papers of the country. A section of the people which mainly consists of the newly educated young men lays emphasis on the point that the animal sacrifices which the non-Hajis offer in their respective localities are not traceable in the traditions of the Holy Prophet of Islam and even if they are, would it not be a feasible idea, under the present difficult circumstances to distribute the equivalent amount of money among the poor and the needy or to spend it on some national enterprise, particularly when there is already a dearth of animal wealth in Pakistan and human needs have immensely increased. The other section,

the orthodox one, persists in the belief that the age-long tradition which the Great Patriarch Abraham under Divine orders established on this earth and which the Holy Prophet of Arabia received and declared to be an integral part of Islamic teachings and himself acted upon it and urged his followers to act upon it likewise, and which throughout the centuries has been the constant practice of Musalmans, must be maintained at all costs and the real or supposed dearth of animals in Pakistan might be made up by other means.

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Background of the Sacrifice Ordinance

Before proceeding to enunciate the Islamic teaching about sacrifices it is essential to point out what Eid-ul-Azha means, how it came to be originated in Islam, what philosophy underlies the sacrifices, or in other words we must know the back-ground of the subject, for without knowing the back-ground of a thing we cannot make a definite mental picture of it. Hence we must know that:

1. Eid is an Arabic word which means a day of collective enjoyment which recurs again and again. There are three such Eids in Islam. (a) Friday, which comes every week and according to a tradition of the Holy Prophet it is the most important of all the Eids and is full of blessings, but people do not realize its importance owing to the frequency with which it comes every week. (b) Eid-ul-Fitr which immediately follows the month of Ramazan every year. It is so called because it opens the door for the believers to eat and drink after the fasts of Ramazan. (c) Eid-al-Azha which falls on the 10th of the month of Zul-Hajj. In Pakistan it is commonly called the Baqar-Eid.

2. The Eid-ul-Azha is so called because animals are slaughtered for sacrifice on the first, second and third day of the Eid. The word اضحی (Azha) in Arabic, is plural of اضحاۃ (Azhat), just as Azahi is the plural of اضحیۃ (uzhiatun) which means an animal meant for sacrifice. It is also called the يوم النحر or the Day of Sacrifices. Both the words have been frequently used by the Holy Prophet himself as we learn from his sayings. Every book of traditions has invariably used this word. In sooth, no other word except these two, has been used for the day of Eid.

In this connection it should also be remembered that the Holy Quran as well as the traditions use the word هدی for sacrifices which are to be offered by pilgrims in the Holy precincts of the Ka'ba and not the word Azha which is used for the sacrifices offered by the non-Hajis (non-pilgrims) in their respective localities.

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3. We learn from the traditions that the Eid-ul-Azha was instituted in the second year of the Hijra which means that the Holy Prophet enjoyed nine or ten such Eids during his sojourn in Medina while he performed the pilgrimage (which proved his last) after the Hijra only in the last year of his life as he expired 2½ months later.

4. The Holy Quran tells us that the Hajj (pilgrimage) was instituted in the time of Prophet Abraham (Al-Hajj 22:28) who, under God's orders settled his first-born, Ishmael, in the arid and waterless valley of Mecca, at a time when there were no means of sustenance of life. This was, in truth, the interpretation of Abraham's dream that he was slaughtering his son with his own hands. On this occasion God ordained animal sacrifice in lieu of human sacrifice but human sacrifice too, did continue in spirit. This was, as it were, the first dedication of a son on the part of a father that was offiered in the way of God so that He might grant to the son (Ishmael) a new life after his apparent "death" and that He might sow a seed which was destined to grow into a big and lofty tree and bear delicious fruits in the Holy person of Muhammad, the last of the prophets, the best of God's creation, and the last Giver of a Universal code of laws to humanity. Says the Holy Prophet, "I am descended of one, who was doubly offered for sacrifice," meaning thereby that the one was the corporeal frame of Ishmael, who, being settled in the waterless valley of Mecca, was, as it were, practically slaughtered by Abraham, his father, and the other the soul of Ishmael that was dedicated in the way of God.

To be brief, animal sacrifices are reminiscent of that great sacrifice but woe be to the spiritual decline of the Muslims and the material ascendency of the modern age that most of them have even forgotten the correct name of Eid-ul-Azha, what to speak of perpetuating the me-

mory of the Great Sacrifice. Instead of pronouncing it as Eid-ul-Azha they pronounce it Eid-uz-Zuha or the Morning Eid, which mistake is shared even by the educated people not excepting the editors of newspapers and their correspondents. Those who have ommitted the word "sacrifice" from the Eid of sacrifices how can they be expected to remember the form of worship implied in the word Eid-ul-Azha (the Eid of sacrifices) while the fact is the Holy Prophet himself named it عیدالاضحی (the Eid of sacrifices) and not Eid-ul-Zuha (the morning Eid.)

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5. Another interesting and notable point of which most people seem to be ignorant is the fact that Eid-ul-Azha prayer is not meant for Hajis (pilgrims) but only for non-Hajis. It is never offered at Mecca because the pilgrimge itself is a magnificent Eid comprising a most perfect form of all the four elements of Eid viz., (a) Worship (b) Assemblage of believers (c) Pleasure (d) Recurrence of the Day of Eid every year. This is why the Islamic Shariah has ordained the Eid prayer for the non-Hajis only so that they too, in their respective localities might commemorate, by offering prayer and animal sacrifices the sacrifice which began with Ishmael and culminated in its spiritual perfection with the Holy Prophet of Islam. Hence wherever in the traditions we find mention of the sacrifices of the Holy Prophet and of his companions, it exclusively refers to the sacrifices of non-Hajis only.

The five points enumerated above in connection with the background of Eid-ul-Azha sacrifices are so prominent and vivid and supported by sound arguments and proofs that even a casual observer of Islam, no matter what sect he belongs to, may not venture to deny them. For the same reason I did not deem it necessary to quote references in support of any of them.

Are animal sacrifices meant for Hajis only ?

Now I take the real question whether animal sacrifices are essential for non-Hajis as well ? If so, is there any proof thereof? Well, if it is a question of essentiality or otherwisee, sacrifices are not essentail even for Hajis in all circumstances. What to speak of their being essential for non-Hajis. The Islamic Law

has imposed certain limitations on sacrifices. For instance, sacrifice is not essential for an *ifrad* (a pilgrim who performs the Hajj only) but it is essential only for a pilgrim who undertakes to combine *Hajj* as well as *Umra* simultaneosly, known in Islamic terminology as *Tamatto'* or *Qiran*, and for one, who starts on pilgrimage but owning to some unavoidable circumstances is deprived of the benefit of performing it.

Secondly, he must be financially well-off to offer animal sacrifice otherwise he may keep fast as atonement for his inability to offer a sacrifice. When animal sacrifices are not essential under all circumstances even for Hajis, there is no question of their being essential for non-Hajis.

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Now the question arises that when sacrifice is not essential for those Hajis who cannot afford to offer it, is it essential for those non-Hajis who can afford it? It must be remembered that the Holy Prophet always offered animal sacrifices on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha and urged his companions to do likewise. Abdullah bin Omar reports that the Holy Prophet sojourned in Medina for a decade and every year on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha he offered a sacrifice, so much so that on his death-bed he willed to his cousin and son-in-law Ali to slaughter an animal even after his death. The Tradition goes to say that Hanash saw that Ali (God be pleased with him) slaughtered two rams as sacrifice. "I said to him", said Hanash, "What do you mean by slaughtering two rams?" Ali replied, "The Holy Porphet had asked me to slaughter an animal on his behalf, so I did it." (*Abu Daud*)

We have another tradition wherein Baraa reports that the Holy Prophet delivered a sermon on the day of Eid-ul-Azha and said, "First of all we should say our Eid prayer and then slaughter an animal for sacrifice. Whoever does so follows my example." In this tradition the word "Sunna" is significant, as it is not technically used here, it may also be taken to mean the essentiality of sacrifices. We have another tradition which says that "a man who can afford to offer a sacrifice but does not do so may better say his prayer in a mosque other than ours". The words of the tradition are too vivid to admit of any comments. These

words of the Holy Prophet were taken to heart by the Companions like all other words of his. Jabla bin Saheem reports that a man inquired of Abdullah bin Omar whether the Eid-ul-Azha sacrifices were essential. Ibn-e-Omar replied that the Holy Prophet as well as his Companions did slaughter animals for sacrifice. The questioner repeated his question and Abdullah bin Omar said, "I have already answered your question, can't you follow me?"

The Holy Prophet did not slaughter an animal for pleasure's sake, or with a view to distribute the flesh among his friends or poor relations, but he did so as a religious duty. Zaid bin Arqam reports that the Companions said, "What do these sacrifices mean, O Prophet of God"? The Holy Prophet said, "It is the doing of your father Abraham." "Of what use then are they to us?" They asked the Holy Prophet again. "Every hair of the slaughtered animal", said the Holy Prophet, "brings goodness to the man who kills it for sacrifice." Hazrat Aisha reports of the Holy Prophet that on the day of Eid-ul-Azha no act of a Muslim is dearer to God than shedding the blood of an animal for sacrifice.

In this tradition the words 'shdeding the blood of animals,' point to the importance of animal sacrifices. On another occasion the Holy Prophet slaughtered an animal not only on his own behalf but also on behalf of the whole Muslim nation. Hazrat Aisha reports that the Holy Prophet bought a ram, slaughtered it with his own hands and prayed to God saying, "O God accept it on my behalf, on behalf of my children and on behalf of my followers (till the day of Judgement)."

Now in the presence of so many authentic and clear traditions who will venture to assert that animal sacrifices are only meant for Hajis and not for non-Hajis? There is no doubt sacrifices are incumbent only upon those who can afford to offer and even if one person in the family can offer, it will suffice for the whole family (Abu Daud). But the example set by our Holy Prophet in slaughtering an animal on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha is very imperative and carries a big reward.

Sacrifices in the Holy Quran

An objection is raised in certain quarters that animal

sacrifices are, no doubt, mentioned in the Traditions but there is no mention of them in the Holy Quran, hence they can be overlooked under certain circumstances. But this viewpoint is as ridiculous as it is erroneous and mischievous. Do we not read in the Holy Quran ?

لقد كان لكم فى رسول الله اسوة حسنة لمن كان
يرجوا الله و اليوم الاخر و ذكر الله كثيراً

"Verily you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model for him who fears Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much."

(b) Again it says :

يا ايها الذين آمنوا اطعيوا الله و اطيعوا الرسول

"O ye who believe ! obey Allah and obey His Messenger".

Now if all the Quranic injunctions culminated in obedience to God only, then where was the necessity of adding the words اطيعوا الرسول which means obedience to the Prophet as well. The fact of the matter is that the Quranic revelation sometimes aims at concision and brevity which may not be easily understood by each and every person of ordinary intelligence. This is why the wisdom of God ordained the obedience to the Prophet as a part of Islamic Shariah so that no phase of it might remain imperfect and unexplained and there might be no occasion for a lame excuse for those who want to flout the commandments of Shariah.

Hence if anything is proved from Hadith and Sunnah by conclusive evidence we shall have to accept it as true. And I hold that the audacity of a man, who, being a follower of the greatest of Prophers and the best of Messengers, declares that he need not follow him, is nothing less than a declaration of his disbelief and irreligion. He will daily confirm to the hundred and one wishes of his wife, his children and his friends but he will not listen to the sayings of the greatest of Prophets and the best of creation. Moreover the Holy Quran, too, is not silent on the question

of sacrifices as it says:

انا اعطينک الکوثر فصل لربک و انحر

"Surely We have given thee abundance of good: so pray to thy Lord and offer sacrifice."

This chapter was revealed just before the year of Hijra* when the Ka'ba was still under the control of the unbelievers and the Hajj had not yet been declared obligatory on the Muslims. The word نحر (Sacrifice) does not refer to sacrifices on the occasion of Hajj (pilgrimage) but an ordinary sacrifice which is offered during the three days of Eid-ul-Azha ; and يوم النحر (day of sacrifices) is another name for Eid-ul-Azha and the same word نحر (nahar) has been used here in this verse. On another occasion the Holy Quran says concerning the pilgrimage :

فان احصر تم فما استيسر من الهدی

"And complete the Hajj and the Umra for the sake of Allah : but if you are kept back, then make whatever offering is easily available." 2 : 197.

Now evidently this verse refers to the pilgrims who may set out with the intention of performing pilgrimage to Mecca but owing to certain unavoidable circumstances (for example, disease, loss of passage-money or insecurity of the road etc.) they may not be able to perform the pilgrimage. But with a keen and discerning eye the Holy Prophet concluded from this verse that as every man has a natural desire to pilgrimage at least once during his life, but owing to some circumstances he has been debarred from undertaking the journey his case falls under the category of those who, being debarred, have to offer a sacrifice. Therefore it can reasonably be argued from this verse that animal sacrifices are essential for non-pilgrims as well. Just as the five daily prayers with their scheduled times have been inferred from the verses of the Holy Quran by the Holy Prophet, similarly the offering of sacrifices has been inferred from the above-mentioned verse by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him). Hence from the study of these two verses we are perfectly justified to conclude that

*Fathul Qadeer by Imam Shukani

the system of sacrifices is based on the Holy Quran while the sayings of the Holy Prophet of Islam are but deductions from the same verse.

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Are Eid sacrifices obligatory?

We need not go into the technicalities of the subject under discussion, suffice it to know that the commandment about sacrifices is based on the teachings of the Holy Quran and is further strengthened by the sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet of Islam. For those who are desirous of studying the subject in the light of the opinions of the four Muslim Doctors of Law the following references will suffice.

اجمع المسلمون على مشروعيتها . . . . فالاضحية سنة عين موكدة . . . .

و الحنفية قالوا هى واجبة . . . . . فاما شروط سنتها فمنها القدرة

> "Muslims of all shades and opinions are agreed on the legality of sacrifices. According to these Doctors of Law sacrifices have been particularly emphasised by the Holy Prophet while the Hanafite School of thought holds the view that they are essential and obligatory on those who can afford to offer them* We also read in the foot-note of Tirmizi :

اختلفوا ان الاضحية واجبة او سنة فذهب ابوحنيفة وصاحباه انها واجبة على حر مسلم مقيم موسر و عندا لشافعى سنة موكدة و هو المشهور فى مذهب احمد و فى مذهب مالك انه سنة واجبة على من استطاعها (حاشيه ترمذى)

That is, there has been a difference of opinion with regard to sacrifices whether they are واجب (obligatory) or سنت (non-obligatory). Imam Abu Hanifa, founder of Hanafite sect, as well as Imam Abu Usuf and Imam Muhammad are of the opinion that Eid sacrifice is obligatory on every free, well-to-do Muslim but Imam Shafai considers sacrifice as non-obligatory but highly urged upon by the Holy Prophet.**

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*The Book of Fiqha on the opinions of the four Doctors of Law Vol. I. pp.593-94

**Tirmizi, margin foot-note

The two references quoted above clearly show that the Hanafite School holds the view that sacrifices are obligatory on all well-to-do Muslims and they have the concurrence of the Maliki School as well. But the other two Schools hold that sacrifices are not obligatory but according to the Holy Prophet, they are essential. I, therefore, need not say any thing more on this point.

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Are Sacrifices, even in Modern Times, Essential?

The question whether sacrifices on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha are obligatory on Hajis and on non-Hajis has already been thrashed out. Now I take the other side of the question viz., even if it is proved that sacrifices are obligatory on non-Hajis as well, will it not be more judicious if, instead of wasting the wealth of cattle, goats and sheep the equivalent amount of money be distributed among thc deserving poor or it may be utilized for furthering national schemes and projects. On principle it may suffice to know that to help the poor with a net amount is not a novel device of modern age, this method is age-old long and was perfectly known to people of pre-Islamic days and it is well-emphasized in the Holy Quran as well. Now everybody can easily understand that when God and His Prophet instituted the system of sacrifices on Eid-ul-Azha there must be some good in it; otherwise where was the necessity of introducing a difficult and costly method instead of adopting a simpler and cheaper one.

The very difference between the two methods clearly shows that God and His Apostle had a definite aim in instituting the system of sacrifices. Nor can it be argued that God concerned Himself only with the needs of the time of the Holy Prophet and that He was not cognizant of the needs of modern times. He is Omniscient and nothing is hidden from Him neither new nor old. The reasoning becomes all the more convincing when we find that the Holy Prophet introduced the institution of *Fitrana* (helping the poor with cash or kind on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.) If he could introduce the *Fitrana* system on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, why not introduce the same on the occasion of Edi-ul-Azha? Hence it follows that the introduction of different methods of spending in the way of God on different occasions involves a

definite aim which we may or may not be able to understand.

Can there be a substitute for animal sacrifices ?

Some of the modern Ulema, although their number is insignificant, are of the opinion that Islamic Shariah has allowed the Hajis to keep fasts if they cannot afford the هدی (animal sacrifice), similarly non-Hajis may offer money as a substitute for animal sacrifice. Moreover, they argue that if a certain Haji may have some trouble in the head and might feel it difficult to get his head shaved during the days of Hajj, he may have resort to a substitute whether it is a fast or charity money. At any rate, Islam has sanctioned the principle of substitute and the same principle may, with advantage, be applied in the case of animal sacrifice. But all this reasoning is illusive, because the ordinance contained in the verses quoted above pertain to Hajj and not to the animal sacrifices and one ordinance pertaining to a particular problem must not be indiscriminately applied to another problem.

Moreover these ordinances are themselves a proof that there is no substitute for sacrifies to be offered by the non-Hajis. Whereas there is a substitute for sacrifices in certain cases, as well. But the provision of a substitute in one case and the non-provision of it in another, simply shows that there is no question of a substitute for sacrifices by the non-Hajis.

The truth of the matter is that whereas sacrifices are obligatory in certain cases of Hajj which is in itself one of the fundamentals of Islam, hence in case the Hajis are unable to offer a substitute they have been provided for them in the Islamic Shariah but as sacrifices are not obligatory on non-Hajis, therefore, no substitute is provided for them. Aparently this is a very simple proposition and there is hardly any room for a sensible man to doubt it.

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Islam ordains sacrifices of life and property.

We now pass on from answering the question in principle to the real answer which is as follows :-

Our Shariah being universal, comprehensive and having been

sent down by the Omnipresent God aims at an all-round development of human nature and of the multifarious phases of it the two phases have been particularly emphasized by the Shariah, namely the phases which deal with the sacrifice of wealth and the sacrifice of self. Those two phases are, as it were, the roots which branch out into various smaller roots. Of those two phases, moral and spiritutal, the Holy Quran says :

ان الله اشترى من المومنين انفسهم و اموالهم بان لهم الجنة

"Surely Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their property in return of the garden they shall have." 9:11.

And in another place it says :

فضل الله المجاهدين باموالهم و انفسهم على القاعدين درجة

"Allah has exalted in rank those who strive with their wealth and their persons above those who sit still."

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Hence the spirit of sacrifice of life and property and the training and state of preparedness of Muslims for these sacrifices is the most important part of Islamic teachings and in fact these are the two pivots on which the whole system of Islamic sacrifices revolves and most of the Islamic ordinances have been revealed to prepare Muslims for these two kinds of sacrifices which form the basis of human nature. If Islam had emphasized either the one or the other phase of sacrifices the Muslim Community would have looked half paralized and half healthy and would have fared no better than a broken reed at times of national trials. In short, Islam has laid emphasis on both kinds of sacrifices to which the Quranic verses refer so that it may be pointed out that paradise can be obtained by offering both kinds of sacrifices and the progress of a nation also depends upon these two kinds of sacrifices. Hence the real aim of Islam in ordering animal sacrifices on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha is to train the Muslims for the sacrifices of their lives and property in the way of God. This aim may be obtained in the following ways:

1. These sacrifices are reminiscent of the Great Scarifice

which Ishmael offered in the way of God both with his body and soul and as a result of which the Greatest of Prophets was born (peace and the blessings of God be on him).

2. Just as the animals such as goats and sheep, cows and camels, are the property of men and are sacrificed for his benefit similarly man, the best of creatures may in times of need be prepared to sacrifice his life for his God, his country and his nation; instead of proving a raw thread he might come forth to the forefront ready to sacrifice his all.

3. So that the sight of slaughtering the animals may weed out any sentiments of weakness, fear and awe which vegitarian nations generally develop in themselves. This is why Islam ordains the slaughtering of animals with one's own hands or at least in one's own presence so that one may have the courage to see the animal slaughtered. Imam Abu Hanifa says that one should kill the animal with one's own hand if one knows how to do it otherwise one should, at least, be present at the time of slaughter.

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These are the three lessons which might be learnt from the animal sacrifices but it is a matter for regret that the so-called educated young Muslims of to-day, who are simply ignorant of the secrets of Shariah, are up to discontinue animal sacrifices and are prone to look upon every thing through coloured glasses and substitute them by cash distribution. In other words, they want to retain sacrifices of property but try to obliterate sacrifices of life so that by paralizing half the body of Shariah the whole spiritual and moral make-up of man be hopelessly destroyed in a manner never to be organised again. How aptly has the poet sung :

من از بیگانگان هرگز نه نالم که بامن هرچه کرد آن آشنا کرد

"I do not complain of the atrocities of my enemies, but I do complain of my friends, who are the sole cause of my distress."

Islamic Shariah is for all times. It admits of no change at all.

Another approach to this question is as follows :

When we firmly believe that the Islamic Shariah is from

our Omnisient God Who knows best all human requirements and the ways of their fulfilment and when we believe that the Shariah is permanent, constant, and invariable it is none of our business to poke our nose (to bring about changes) in its commandments and thus make a toy of it for human brains, except when the Shariah itself concedes certain amount of latitude in certain circumstances. For example, the Shariah requires Muslims to perform ablution before prayers but if water is not available or there is the fear or apprehension of one's developing the disease one might perform what is known as *tayammum*; or, the Shariah requires believers to say their prayers in a standing position but it concedes them the latitude to say their prayers in a sitting position if they are unable to stand; or again, the fasts of Ramazan are obligatory on Muslims but if some one happens to be ill or on a journey, he may not observe fasts but postpone them till he has recovered from his illness or has returned home from his journey. Now all these forms are lawful and are a part of our Shariah. But no son of man can prove that a concession has been conceded in the case of sacrifices during the day of Eid-ul-Azha. But there is, as stated above, one concession even in the case of sacrifices as well when God says :

لا يكلف الله نفساً الا و سعها

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That is, only those are required to offer animal sacrifices who are capable of doing so. As to the use of the meat of a slaughtered animal the Shariah lays down the rule that (1) it should be used by himself and his family (2) by his relatives and friends (3) by his neighbours and (4) by the poor and the needy in the neighbourhood. Just as your souls are jubilant over the prospects of a happy Eid, your corporeal frames as well as of those connected with you may partake of the pleasures of Eid.

It should be noted that whereas the worship of God and the service of religion require the application of both soul and body together why then, should the latter (body) be deprived of the share of the reward by the wise Providence. Besides emphasizing the spiritual side of sacrifices the Holy Prophet says :

ايام التشريق ايام اكل و شرب و ذكرالله (مسلم)

"The days of Eid are the days of eating and

drinking besides the remeberance of God. The body should not be deprived of its proper share of a rich diet. Even the poor and the needy should be made to share of your dainties which you enjoy during these days."

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Dearth of Animals for Food.

Protagonists of the prohibition of sacrifices now-a-days advance the argument that the partition of Indian sub-continent has resulted in the increase of meat-eaters in Pakistan and the dearth of animals for food, it is expedient, therefore, to save the animals from the ruthless slaughter and destruction to which they are being subjected lest the famine of meat, as an article of diet, in the country should adversely affect the animals of agricultural use and render the problem of food serious and intricate. Evidently it is an important question and deserves serious consideration. As a result of the partition of the country quite a goodly number of animals was destroyed and the increase of Muslim population in West Pakistan has resulted in a corresponding drain upon animal wealth of the country. Under the circumstances, the fear of the dearth of animals is quite understandable. But on deeper thought the apprehension would be found to be more imaginary than real; for those who offer sacrifices form only $\frac{1}{3}$ p.c. of the whole population. The city of Lyallpur for instance, being the centre of textile industry, is one of the bigger and wealthier cities of Pakistan and the district of Lyallpur is perhaps the wealthiest of all the districts of West Pakistan. Now the facts and figures show that the number of animals slaughtered in Lyallpur city and its suberbs during the three days of Eid-ul-Azha was 17000 in 1959 and the number of killed in the whole district including the town was 27,000 only. Now if the, total population of the district be taken to contain 27,00,000 souls the ratio of sacrifices per head is only one p.c. and if the rate of purely rural population be taken into consideration the ratio is even less than 1 p.c. because the number of sacrifices in the rural districts is insignificant as compared with those in towns. And it is an established fact that 90.p.c of the population of West Pakistan live in villages. The figures clearly show that if there are satisfactory arrangements

for animal production as is the case in the advanced countries of the world, there is hardly any cause for alarm. But if there is no arrangement for increasing animal production against consumption then even the proverbial coffers of Qarun will not suffice.

We learn from the tradition that if there are more than one persons in a family who can afford to offer a sacrifice each, even then only one animal will suffice for the whole family. (Abu Daud on Sacrifices) This is why most of the Doctors of Law have taken the family as a unit and some of them have gone to the extent of taking the larger family as a unit :

Again it may be noted that during the days of Eid-ul-Azha the usual practice of slaughtering animals is naturally stopped and meat shops remain practically closed for three days because there is sufficient meat for family needs in the house or it is sent as a present by friends and ralatives. Hence if, on the one hand, more animals are slaughtered for sacrifice there is a natural stoppage on the other, so the difference is not very appreciable.

Limitations on animals of sacrifice.

The Holy Prophet of Islam has laid down certain conditions concerning the selection of animals for sacrifice. For example :

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1. The age limit for the animal ;

2. Milch animals are not to be slaughtered for sacrifice.

On one occasion a companion of the Holy Prophet was about to kill a milch goat for him when the Holy Prophet said, "You must not kill a milch goat".

3. A cow meant for sacrifice may be shared by seven persons and a camel by ten (persons), so that there may be no wastage of meat. The Doctors have laid down certain conditions for a man who is capable of offering a sacrifice ; for instance :

(1) He must have a house of his own ;

(2) He must have a reasonable amount of property.

(3) He must have gold worth at least 20 dinars (a gold coin) or silver worth 200 dirhams or he must not be in debt,

the amount of which may not be equivalent to his property, and again he must not be on journey, but staying at home.

Now in the presence of numerous limitations so wisely imposed by Shariah on the animals meant for sacrifice where lies the wisdom of interfering in a religious commandment which is so essential for individual as well as national progress?

Again in the light of medical science and the science of animal husbandry a male (ram, bull or camel) is sufficient for a number of females for procreation purposes. If milch animals are carefully safeguarded and bulls are properly kept for procreation, then there is no real danger. Moreover, animals used for agricultural purposes are seldom killed by cultivators. Hence from whichever angle of view we might perceive the supposed fear of the dearth of animal wealth in the country is only imaginary, not real. Now all these limitations not-with-standing, if the Government deems it necessary it may impose certain limitations on the slaughtering of specially useful animals in the interest of the country or prohibit the killing of animals on certain days of the week, as it has already done, but it will be on the safe side if it did not interfere in the religious commandments.

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Procreation of animals to be emphasized.

Our Government, like other civilized governments of the world, may undertake several useful plans for increasing the number of animals. It is a fact that due to the cold climate of Europe and America as well as the comparative wealth of the people more animals are killed there than in Pakistan, and it may reasonably be asserted that a Westerner consumes four or five times as much meat as a Pakistani does but the dearth of animals has never been apprehended in the Western countries. This is because particular attention is paid to give proper nourishment to animals, the procreation and curing of their diseases, but the majority of people in Pakistan do not think of anything better than interfering in matters of religion and thus preserve the stock of animals—a serious affair to which the intelligentsia of the country should pay particular attention in order to avoid both irreligiousness and the deterioration of economic system of the country.

Islamic Shariah prohibits prodigality in the use of meat

It cannot be gainsaid that the Islamic Shariah has prohibited too much use of meat in order to protect the moral side of man and his faculties by a judicious admixture of meat, cereals, vegetables and fruits. Says the Holy Quran :

كلوا و اشربوا ولا تسرفوا انه لا يحب المسرفين (اعراف)

"Eat and drink but exceed not the bounds ; surely He does not love those who exceed the bounds. (7 : 32)

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In the light of this injunction of the Shariah it would be quite reasonable to put a certain control on the slaughter of animals without interfering in the Islamic cammandments."

To sum up what has been told :

1. The word Eid-ul-Azha, as named by the Holy Prophet himelf, is distinct from the Eid-ul-Fitr and the very name of it suggests the purpose which underlies it. It has been instituted in commemoration of Prophet Ishmael's sacrifice of body and soul and as a result of which the noblest and the most perfect of human beings, the Seal of Prophets, came into being.

2. The Holy Quran itself has instituted the system of sacrifices in Islam as it says :

فصل لربك و انحر

فان احصرتم فما استيسر من الهدى

3. The Holy Founder of Islam not only emphasized the sacrifices to be offered on the day of Eid but actually slaughtered animals on that sacred Day and declared that a Muslim who can afford to, but does not offer a sacrifice has no business to join in our Eid prayers.

4. The Companions of the Holy Prophet followed the example set by him in this respect.

5. The consensus of opinion of Muslims of all shades is in favour of the legality of sacrifices. Moreover the four Doctors of Law agree on the point that sacrifices are essential and obligatory

on those who have the capacity to do so.

6. The suggestion that animal sacrifices should be replaced by pecuniary aid is nothing less than an heretical idea for it is tantamount to wrongfully meddling with the Islamic Shariah which originated from the Divine source and was inculcated by the Seal of Prophets himself. Moreover, the substitution defeats the very object which animal sacrifices are meant to carry—viz, enliven, maintain and develop the spirit of self-sacrifice in the hearts of Muslims.

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7. The apprehension that the injudicious slaughter of animals will cause famine in food production is unreal, for in the glorious past, when the Muslims rolled in wealth no Islamic country ever experienced such a famine during the last 1400 years. Why so now in Pakistan? when the percentage of sacrificers is negligible as compared with the non-sacrificers in the country and the Shariah itself has laid down so many hard and fast rules about sacrifices. There remains not the remotest possibility of the famine of animals provided the Government take necessary steps for their procreation, their health and their maladies.

8. Moreover, Islam prohibits the prodigal use and lays down instructions for an admixture of food which deeply affects the faculties and morals of man.

Need of Religiousness, Piety and God-fearing among the Muslims

Up till now I have discussed, in principle, all the important phases of this problem but what the Muslims really stand in need of, is the love of religion, respect for the faith and eagerness for understanding the laws of Shariah. Without a thorough understanding of their faith they cannot put up a brave defence against the materialistic tendencies of the modern age.

So long the heart is sick, there is no use applyiug balm to the parts of the body. How beautifully the Holy Prophet says:

> "In the corporeal frame of man there is a piece of flesh, which, if diseased, the whole body is diseased but if it is healthy and functions properly the whole body becomes healthy and all the parts

of the body work harmoniously. Remember, it is the heart which is the fountain-head of all good actions."

Curing and storing up of meat

Now I take up the question of curing and preserving of meat. The pre-Islamic Arabs used to preserve surplus meat by curing it properly. Islam, too, has not only permitted the use of seasoned meat but has laid stress on it. This is known as تشریق or the preservation of meat by the admixture of various spices, and the days immediately following Eid-ul-Azha are called the days of تشریق or of preservation of meat. The Holy Prophet says :

كلوا و اطعموا و ادخروا

"Make use of the meat of slaughtered animals yourselves and also give it to your friends and relatives and preserve the surplus for future use."

The verdict of the Hanafite School of thought concerning the meat of slaughtered animals is as follows :

"It is desirable that the meat of the slaughtered animal should be used by the slaughterer himself and by the poor and the needy in the neighbourhood and the surplus may be preserved ; preferably one should distribute $\frac{1}{3}$ among one's friends and relatives and $\frac{1}{3}$ be preserved for future use."

In the presence of a wise teaching as the aboye, there is hardly any danger of the wastage of animal flesh. The indigenous and elementary methods of the preservation of meat adopted by ancient Arabs may still be profitably used but with the scientific methods called dehydration, it has become possible to preserve meat for a considerable time. This gives the Muslims an opportunity to develop a profitable industry on commercial lines and the Saudi Government may well be advised to carry on a new industry in wool, leather and preservation of meat by adopting modern scientific methods.

The wise and comprehensive teachings of Islam dealing

with all phases of human life fill the heart of a true Muslim with feelings of sincere gratitude for the Holy Prophet of Islam who brought down such a brilliant code of laws which provides for all sorts of human needs and requirements.

The idea of putting a stop to animal sacrifice is due to distance from the time of the Holy Prophet

Having proceeded so far with the subject I came to know that the same problem was raised as early as 1912 when the Turkish Government was involved in a War with the Balkan States and some of the 'modernized' Muslims had suggested that instead of offering animal sacrifices for the Eid-ul-Azha the equivalent sum of money should be contributed towards the Turkish Relief Fund. A certain pleader writing in the Daily "Zimidar" of Lahore had appealed to the leading Ulema of the Punjab to give their opinions on the subject including the illustrious name of Hazrat Maulana Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, the then Leader of the Ahmadiyya Community. Dr. Mirza Yaqub Beg of the Ahmadiyya Buildings, Lahore, sent a copy of the paper to Qadian and requested the Maulana to write a few lines on the subject. Hazrat Maulana wrote as follows :

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> "Money was urgently needed in the blessed days of the Holy Prophet as well as the Pious Caliphs but animal sacrifices were never stopped. Even the Shia Doctors of Law do not support the view that animal sacrifices may be replaced by contribution in cash towards charitable funds.

"True it is that we read in the Quran :

لن ينال الله لحومها و لا دماءها و لكن
يناله التقوى منكم .

'Their flesh reaches not Allah, nor does their blood, but it is your righteousness that reaches Him..'

"But the interpretation put forth by the Shia Alim Maulvi Abdul Ali, is not correct, animal sacrifices are basically correct and must remain in tact.

"The difficulty is that Muslims do not ponder over teachings of the Holy Quran. Have they become so poor and destitute that they have ventured to obliterate the system of sacrifices ?If they are so poor they might stop to pay the Zakat, may not offer sacrifices and may not spend on the education of their children. If they want to put a stop to sacrifices in the Indian Sub-continen let them begin with Mecca. Let the Turks themselves stop animal sacrifices, the money collected for the Aligarh University might be advanced towards the Turkish Relief Fund. They may not spend so lavishly on marriagcs and deaths, le not the Turks themselves spend so lavishly on luxuries; let the Indian Muslims subscribe Rs. 1 each and they will subscribe as much as 700,00,000 but they must not lay hands on the foundamental principles of Islam.

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"The poor Arabs of Tripoli are laying down their lives, let the Turks hold on for some time more.

قد افلح المومنون و لله العزة و للرسول

و للمومنين انا لننصر رسلنا و الذين آمنوا

فى الحياة الدنيا .

"Surely, success does come to the believers. True honour belongs to Allah and to the Messenger and the believers. We do help Our messengers and believers in this world.

"Sheikh Abdul Ali Harvi the Shia scholar has contributed an article in the "Paisa Akhbar", Lahore, in which he has vainly tried to prove that animal sacrifices are to be offered only at Mecca during the days of pilgrimage and nowhere else. But suffice it to say that the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet of Islam, the sustained practice of his blessed Companions, the Doctors of Law, the

Mujaddids of Islam and the general body of Muslims during the centuries cannot be belied by the novel interpretation of a Shia scholar.

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10.11.1912 Noor-ud-Din Qadian"

The Fatwa or the verdict quoted above contains a self-evident truth and requires no explanation. The learned author of the letter regards animal sacrifices as an essential part of the Islamic Shariah and their stoppage in one form or another is an act designed against Islam——an idea which originates from want of proper understanding of the true spirit of Islamic teachings. Now, as to his criticism of those who seem to incline in favour of stopping animal sacrifices and who do not understand the true significance of the Quranic verse :

لن ينال الله لحومها ولا دماءها

the learned Maulana wants to bring home to us the subtle philosophy of the Islamic Shariah. Hazrat Maulana means to say that every human action has an exterior as well as an interior side of it or in other words it consists of what may be called the letter and the spirit of it. The outward form of an action forms the letter of the action while the spirit of it is the essence or the philosophy of it which must be maintained at all costs.

As for instance, the Islamic commandment of prayer consists of the letter viz., the outward forms—standing, bending, prostrating and sitting etc. while the spirit of it is the goodness, purity and the nearness to God which He wants to create among the Muslims and which are referred to in the verse.

ان الصلوة تنهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر

"Prayer keeps you away from what is foul and undesirable."

and in a tradition of the Holy Prophet

الصلواة معراج المومنين

"Prayer is the ladder by means of which a believer

ascendsto the heavens."

Now none would venture to say that the outward form of prayer should be left out while the spirit of it be maintained. The same explanation may be offered of the Commandment about the animal sacrifices which is wrongly interpreted by some of the Ulema. Their assertion that the words :

ولكن يناله التقوى منكم

mean that we may not stick to the letter but should take the spirit of the words of the above verse. In other words, the animals may not be slaughtered but the equivalent sum of money may be utilized in another form according as the needs of the time are. The inference, however, is baseless and quite against the idiom of the Holy Quran. If the inference is corrcct what does the adjacent verse mean

فكلوا منها و اطعموا القانع والمعتر (حج) ٣٧

"So eat of the flesh of the animals and feed him who is needy but contented and him who supplicates."

The study of the two verses taken jointly simply means that not only the letter but also the spirit of the commandments concerning sacrifices is to be observed by Muslims, so that they may not adhere to the letter only but also to the spirit of the commandment. But it does rot mean that we should give up the outward forms of Shariah. The spirit of the commandment of prayer is ultimately the nearness to God and the avoidance from evils but who will dispense with the outward forms of it ? The aim of fasting is turning to God and a disliking for worldly pleasures but who will like to give up eating and drinking before and after the fast ?

The real spirit of pilgrimage is to create a sense of collectivism and centrilization but can we give up the ourward forms of pilgrimage, the incumambulation of the Ka'ba and the staying in the plain of Arafat. Without the outward forms there is no prayer, no fast and no pilgrimage.

In the end I quote a fatwa by the Promised Messiah :

The Fatwa or Verdict about Sacrifices

by

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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

A gentleman wrote to Hazrat at Qadian :

"I contributed a certain amount of money as my share of the animal sarifice but my co-sharers refused to admit me as a partner on certain grounds. Now, if I send the same amount for the Poor Fund at Qadian shall I be entitled to have offered the sacrifice?

To which Hazrat replied as follows :

> "You can be said to have offered a sacrifice only when you have actually slaughtered an animal. Contribution to the Poor Fund does not constitute sacrifice. If the amount is sufficient enough for purchasing a goat or a ram, you may slaughter one. But if it is insufficient then it is not obligatory on you to offer a saerifice."

Now as I have tried to elucidate all the phases of Eid Sacrifices, I pray to God Almighty to guide my country-men to the right path in the matter of sacrifices so that on the one hand the sanctity of Islamic Shariah muy be maintained and on the other the economic apprehensions if any, may be averted by the mercy of God and the wisdom of those at the helm of affairs.

All praise is due to the Sustainer of the universe.

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اے حب جاہ والو! یہ رہنے کی جا نہیں
اس میں تو پہلے لوگوں سے کوئی رہا نہیں

دیکھو تو جا کے ان کے مقابر کو اک نظر
سوچو کہ اب سلف ہیں تمہارے گئے کدھر

اک دن وہی مقام تمہارا مقام ہے
اک دن یہ صبح زندگی کی تم پہ شام ہے

اک دن تمہارا لوگ جنازہ اٹھائیں گے
پھر دفن کر کے گھر میں تاسف سے آئینگے

Poem

The Promised Messiah

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O ye, who love the pomp
And the pleasures of this world—
Bear well in mind
This is not the place
Of a permanent abode for man :
Of those who have lived
In it before,
Not one is to be seen
Anywhere, at the moment !
  Go and visit their desolate
Graves ; and contemplate
Where have they all gone —
Where have they disappeared !
  One of these days,
You, yourself, are bound
For the same place :
For, sure enough,
The morning of your life
Shall turn into the gloom
Of a darkened evening !
  Your remains, one day,
The people shall carry
On their shoulders ;
And after they have heaped
Up the earth over you,
They shall sadly
Walk back to their homes !

English : Sufi A. Q. Niaz

A Sermon on the Blessings of Ramazan

Delivered by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II

Adapted and Translated by A. R. Khan Bengalee

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I

The Holy Month of Ramazan comes and opens the door of Divine Mercy and Grace for those who seek them. Every one is blessed in accordance with his capacity to receive. In other words, only those benefit by this month, who desire to be blessed and make efforts ; but those who are neglectful derive no benefit at all. There are blessings in months, days, men, words of God and science, but only for those who make themselves deserving of them. Prophets of God are a Blessing, but only for those who accept them. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him was a Mercy and Blessing for mankind, but only those who accepted him derived this blessing. In this age, the Promised Messiah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, has brought Mercy and Blessings from God, but only for those who open their hearts to accept him. In short, only those who strive and make efforts benefit by the sources of blessings.

So if you desire to benefit from this blessed Month, give up sloth and negligence, and strive hard to bring about a transformation within yourselves, for without transformation and purification of heart no blessing can be derived. You have seen numerous signs of God. Not once or twice, but so many times you have seen the glorious manifestations of His words and attributes. So appreciate His Signs, bow down to Him in all humility and meekness, call Him, He will answer and remove your distress and trouble, and grant you success ; establish a firm relation with Him, so that His forgiveness and protection may enshroud you ; wash away the rust of sloth, so that, He may have mercy on you ; care not for the curses of the world, for if you are really good, the curses of the world will not make you sad ; on the contrary if you are bad, the praises of the world will not make you good. Lovers of God are not

influenced by the curses of the world ; only those who are away from Him are influenced by people's opinions or curses.

So do not care for the opinions of the people, try to be good in the eyes of Allah. If He is pleased with you, you need not fear anybody. Purify yourselves from all hypocricies, be sincere. Without purity and sincerity, you cannot please Allah. Foster love and sincerity, so that you may be reckoned as His beloved ones.

II

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In the blessed Month of Ramazan the Holy Quran was revealed. So we should honour and observe this Month in accordance with the Divine injunction. There are some duties and obligations which, though always incumbent, are demonstrated or carried out with greater care, on special occasions. For example, love and respect for parents, which is always incumbent upon children, is not shown in the same manner or degree in the absence of parents as it is shown in their presence. Although love and respect for parents is always present in the hearts of the children, yet it cannot be denied that feelings of love and respect are intensified by the presence of the parents.

Similar is the case of our relation with Allah. Obedience to Him is always incumbent, but there are occasions on which He comes nearer to men, even as, parents come to their children. Just as children show greater respect and love to their parents when the latter are in their presence, even so, should we show greater obedience to Allah when He is supposed to come nearer to us. Of course, we cannot see Allah with our physical eyes ; indeed, we can see Him with our spiritual eyes. Even if, we cannot see Him with our spiritual eyes, still we should have the same sort of feeling for Him as is produced by the spiritual sight of Him. A blind child cannot see his parents, yet when he hears their voice or others tell him that his parents are by him, he experiences the same emotions of love as is experienced by those who see their parents. Hence, even those who are not blessed with spiritual sight, can hear of God from others who have seen Him.

In short, if a person possesses the least amount of faith,

he shall have, in the Month of Ramazan, the same mental attitude, as have those who can see Allah with their spiritual eyes. So during the days of Ramazan, a believer should show greater respect for religious principles and injunctions and demonstrate increased loyalty and submission to Allah.

Remember, the purpose of observing Fast is not to starve, but to bring about in one's own self a moral and spiritual transformation. So, to go without food and drink is of no use unless it is accompanied by an increasing spirit of sacrifice. One's going without lawful food, drink and sexual relation, indicates that one is ready to sacrifice one's legitimate rights for the sake of Allah, not to speak of infringing the rights of others. Hence, if after observing Fast, we are not prepared to make sacrifices, we have attained nothing by fasting. An ordinary believer is expected to be constant in his faith and steadfast in Islamic injunctions and practices. So after observing fast, a believer should be firmer in his faith and more steadfast in his practice and would never get tired of observing religious injunctions. So, I exhort the members of the community to avail themselves of the blessings of this Holy Month and try to be true believers. There are some who, after doing some service or making some sacrifice, become slack, but a true believer can never be slack, his conduct never deteriorates, he never steps backward. I, therefore, exhort my friends to give up all sloth and slackness, and prove themselves true believers. Amen.

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